

GRAND GLORYING NO. 3451

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*“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”*
Galatians 6:14

WITH that, “God forbid,” Paul makes a clean sweep of every other ground of boasting and casts himself upon the one only chosen object of his soul’s glorying. And yet, if you will think of it, Paul had, after the fashion of other men, many things in which he might have gloried. If it had so pleased him, he might have boasted of his pedigree, for he was “a Hebrew of the Hebrews.” He could trace his genealogy, as the pure Hebrews could, up to that great fountain of nobility—Abraham himself.

If he had pleased, he might have boasted in the precision of the former ritual which he had practiced, for he could say that as touching the law, he had been a Pharisee—a man observant of the minutest points of the very letter of the law, careful for its doctrinal tittles, not allowing even the gnat to escape him, but straining after it with care.

And yet the apostle did not care to boast, either of his pedigree or of his ritualism. He casts them both aside, and though he had once gloried in them, he now counted them but dross, that he might win Christ and be found in Him. Surely, if the apostle had wished it, he might have gloried in his martyr-life. He did once give a list of what he had suffered, and he added, “I have become a fool in glorying; you have compelled me.”

Had he not been beaten with rods, shipwrecked, subject to perils from robbers, perils from false brethren, imprisonment and stones? And yet you never hear him glory in that wonderful martyr-life of his. Among the apostles, he was no less than the chief in that which he suffered, and yet he says, “God forbid that I should glory in it.”

He might have gloried in the revelation which he received. Who among us has ever seen or heard what Paul was made to see and hear when he was caught up into the third heavens to hear things which it is not lawful for a man to utter? He might, if he had chosen to boast, have boasted in this revelation, but he did not do so. “God forbid,” said he, “that I should glory,” and that “God forbid” includes even that revelation.

Amongst scholars Paul might have taken an eminent position. He was well qualified to speak in the Areopagus, for even there, in that profound assembly, was probably not one with greater knowledge and of more subtle mind than he, who was once called, “Saul of Tarsus.” Read the epistles, brethren. Why, the apostle has the instinct of Bacon and the insight of Sir Isaac Newton.

The man seems to have looked through a question, where others would have looked round about it and have seen nothing. Yet, though he must have felt a human delight in the talents which God had given him—and must have known that he possessed them—yet still he says concerning them, “God forbid that I should glory.”

He seems to take all that he had, all that he did, and all that he was, and put it all away, and come forward with no other theme upon his lip, and no greater love in his heart, except this—Jesus crucified for the sons of men. Jesus to be great among the nations. Jesus, the slaughtered Lamb, to be made unto men their life from the dead, their salvation from going down into the pit. “God forbid,” says he—that

memorable speech, that eloquent declaration, that glorious self-denying, yet exalting resolve—"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

We shall be brief upon each point at this time, but the first inquiry must naturally be—

I. WHAT IS THIS CROSS IN WHICH PAUL RESOLVED TO GLORY?

You need not to be told, my brethren, that Paul set no store by the material cross, or by the sign of the cross. You know that the making of the sign of the cross, and the paying of religious reverence to that, is as great a superstition as the belief in witches, and perhaps, as men come to be enlightened, they will wonder how it is that some men could have thought that there could be more sanctity about a cross than about a circle or the parallelogram, for really there is no holiness in the sign of the cross, and I sometimes wish that some Christians would not countenance that emblem, since it seems to imply a superstitious reverence to that kind of thing.

Paul meant no such thing. He would have abandoned in contempt any superstitious use of the cross or the crucifix, and he would do so now if he were here, and I hope the result would be that, as at Ephesus they burned their conjuring hosts, so now men would put their chasubles, their albs, and all their fripperies and upholstery together and burn them in one glorious pile as the result of the preaching of the true cross of Christ.

What did the apostle mean, then? He meant, in a single word, *the great doctrine of the atonement offered for sin by the Son of God upon Mount Calvary*. "The cross" is the short term for "substitutionary suffering," for "vicarious sacrifice," for the offering up of the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. The apostle was never cloudy about this matter. Wherever he went, he preached that God was in Christ reconciling the world with Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

His declarations were always clear. "Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world." He was always saying that Jesus Christ took our sins and bore them in His own body on the tree—that He was punished instead of us, that the claims of divine justice were met by the death of the Redeemer, that He was made a curse for us that we might be enriched and blessed of God in Him—that He made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Paul's great master-point was that Jesus actually suffered to vindicate the divine justice by enduring, instead of us, the punishment due to our sins.

And he meant also by it *that Gospel which springs out of the cross*, and which is contained in these few words, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "He that believeth on him is not condemned." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Paul told the people that the Son of God was made man, and suffered in human form to take away human guilt, and that whoever, the wide world over, would come and rest in what Christ had done should be saved.

This was the Gospel which he proclaimed in every place. For barbarian and Scythian, this was the Gospel. For the Greek and the Jew, the same. For the illiterate, for the learned, for the king, and for the peasant—'tis evermore his one theme—a bleeding Savior and a sinner looking to Him—a living Christ dying, that a dying world might live. This is that Gospel which we preach from Sabbath to Sabbath, which will save your souls, and which you delight to sing of in words like these:

*"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains."*

This was "the cross" which Paul resolved to glory in.

II. WHAT WAS THERE IN THIS PARTICULAR DOCTRINE OR FACT FOR THE APOSTLE TO GLORY IN AT ALL?

The answer is, first, that *there is glory in the fact itself*. It is a fact entirely by itself, unique, unparalleled. The mythology of the heathens had invented many, many strange things, but among them

all there is nothing so beautiful, even if it were not true, nothing so perfect in its imagery, as this—that God, the Offended One, should give up His Only Begotten that, in order that justice might not be injured, at the same time, His mercy might have full sweep—that the Only Begotten should die, that the offending ones might live.

There is nothing like this in the whole range of human poetry. Men had fine poetic imaginings before, and there were prophetic declarations of the coming of Christ, and they prophesied some wonderful things, but of all the poets of all the nations it may be said that they never conceived anything like this—the Offended One dies, that the offenders might live.

“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God first loved us.” “Beloved, behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.”

That one fact that God descended from the royalties of heaven, that He might take upon Himself the servitude of earth in the form of man, and offer Himself a sacrifice for sin, reveals the infinite wisdom, together with the infinite love of God, besides casting a brilliant light upon all His other attributes. It stands a marvel of marvels, a wonder of wonders, in which the believer may glory, glory as much as he will.

You know we do not doubt about this fact. We hold it, nay, we are sure of it, and it is a very great reality to us. I was passing, some years ago, a Socinian chapel in this great London of ours, and I saw an announcement of the subjects upon which sermons were to be delivered. If I remember rightly, there was to be a sermon on the morning of one Sunday upon some political subject—and in the evening there was to be a sermon upon the crucifixion, but the word was spelt “*crucification*.”

And I thought, “Ah! just so, and though you may not mean it, it is just that with you—it is nothing more to you than a mere fiction, but to us it is real.” We believe that the blood of Jesus really takes away sin. We believe that He really laid down His life to redeem us from our iniquity—and to us the most real, sublime, grand soul-moving thing beneath heaven, and even in heaven is this—that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and died that He might save them. The apostle, then, gloried in the fact as a fact.

And next, the apostle gloried in the fact *viewing the simplicity of it*—the simplicity of the doctrine which grew out of the fact. It is frequently said, “Oh! these evangelical preachers, these men that preach up Christ, these popular preachers—they are very shallow-brained men. They talk mere platitudes. They do not read the German philosophers, they do not go to the bottom of the thing and stir the mud—they are content with just telling the people really such plain and common things that you cannot expect enlightened people in this nineteenth century to care to go and hear them.”

It is a very odd thing that they are the only people who do go to hear them. That only shows, I suppose, that there are plenty of people who are shallow too. But we boast, if in anything, in the sheer simplicity of this truth that we preach. If the cross of Christ were a marvelous conundrum, the answer to which none could guess but a philosopher trained for fifty years, if we understood it so, we should feel as if it were scarcely worthwhile for us to tell it, since there would be so few that could be benefited by it.

But we thank God that we have a simple Gospel to preach to you, because there are so many in this world who want saving quite as much as the wisest, but who could not be saved if the Gospel were not simple. I thank God that, when Christ is preached in the Union House, He is believed there, and when Christ is preached to the most benighted nation, He is received there, and He is just as sweet and precious to those who cannot read as to those who are the best educated.

No, we do not, and never will, blush because the Gospel is simply, “Believe and live.” We think that every statement of great truth before it can do good to the heart must be simple. It seems to us that its simplicity is a part of its grandeur—that it is more God-like, to give us a Gospel which can be spoken in few words by simple men, than to give us something involved and intertwined—the meaning of which we would never be able to guess.

We thank God, dear hearer, that it does not need many minutes to tell you what you must do to be saved. believe in Jesus, that is, trust Him—trust Him with all your heart. Cast yourself flat upon Him—you cannot fall any lower when you are down there. Cast yourself on His arms, rely upon His merits, and you are saved. God forbid that we should glory save in this very simplicity, which some persons so fiercely decry.

Paul gloried, and we glory, in the next place, *in the freeness and suitability of the Gospel*. The apostle never found himself in a place where the Gospel was not suitable. Sometimes some of you young men who are here tonight may have to go out to supply pulpits, and you may be apt to ask yourselves and ask one another, “Well, what subject shall I take?” I answer you—wherever you go, preach Jesus Christ—and that will suit every congregation, and if it does not, the congregation that is unsuited by it will not be suited at all—and they ought to have twice as much of it till they are suited with it.

Preach up Jesus Christ. No matter how noble the audience, or how poor, still preach the atonement. Preach up the dying Savior, instead of men, and it never can be out of season. Those men who, for the sake of variety and freshness, run away from their Bibles are like men who, for the sake of wealth, run away from a substantial business which brings them in their thousands in order to speculate where bankruptcy must be their only gain.

Close to the cross! There is no such variety as in that one theme. It is like a diamond with a thousand facets, each one reflecting its own sweet light. You shall preach Jesus Christ to the angels in heaven throughout eternity and make known to them the unsearchable riches of God in Christ Jesus—but the theme will be quite inexhaustible.

What a blessing, though, that this cross of Christ should be so suitable to every person we meet with! If you take the cross of Jesus Christ into the condemned cell, there is nothing else that is so likely to awaken that slumbering soul. If you take it to our criminals—alas! that there are so many!—it is the only balm of Gilead to them. Go with it to the lodging houses, and the back slums, and the street corners of St. Giles’s, or where you will, and this story of the man, Christ Jesus, who loved and died, touches all hearts.

You have heard of the Greenlanders. The missionaries thought they ought first to instruct them in the doctrine of the Trinity, so they preached away to them of the Godhead, but the Greenlander did not care about it. But one of them, while interpreting, I think, the third chapter of John, came across that blessed passage, “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life,” and the Greenlanders stopped him and said, Why did you not tell us that before?”

“Oh! I thought I had better begin by telling you of some of the other truths.” “But we knew all those, or could have guessed them—why didn’t you tell us this before?” From that moment the good Moravians lifted up Christ as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, and the eyes and hearts of the Greenlanders began to look to Him, and Jesus Christ was the glory of that land. We may say of this doctrine of the cross, as David did of Goliath’s sword, “There is none like it.” It is suitable in all places, wherever we may be found.

Truly, brethren, Paul might well glory in the cross, if you will kindly remember *the great results which are sure to come from its constant and faithful preaching*. There is no land where the cross has been lifted up, but is the better for it. Even those countries in which we have been compelled to regard missions as a failure have still received much blessing as the result. If the people have not been converted, yet still the bringing of the light into contact with their thick darkness has done something, though not all that we could wish.

See yonder South Sea Islands, where the savage is clothed and in his right mind. Go tonight, if you can, on the wings of imagination, to the Bechuana villages, where Mr. Moffat labored amongst the Bushmen, about the existence of whose souls even there was once some doubt, and see what has been done there!

Ay, and even in this land, with all our sins, how different are we from our savage forefathers, and how can Edinburgh, and London, and Glasgow tell you how the putting down of a district church or chapel has turned the heathen population of these days into a Christian community. This is the great lever to uplift the masses. Where Jesus is preached, signs and effects follow in which we may well rejoice.

How many a home that was once filthy and miserable has been cheered and comforted now that father is a Christian. How many a man who used to reel in and out of the gin shop or the public house now delights to sing another song, and to drink of other wines on the lees, well refined! What changes grace is making among us! How some of us could tell of them as long as we live, we ourselves being changed! We will then say, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

You know, as I was last night turning over this text in my mind, I shut my eyes and saw—for you see a great deal more with your eyes shut than with them open sometimes—as I looked I thought I saw a cross before me and it began to grow. I saw it as I had never seen it before. It grew upon me—grew every moment. I saw it go downward into the earth, and as its foot descended, graves began to open—for resurrection comes from the cross—and hell itself began to tremble, for nothing shakes the infernal kingdom like the cross.

Then I looked up, and the cross had been growing till it reached up to heaven, bearing with it tens of thousands of redeemed souls, and I thought of that verse—

*"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."*

I turned my eye lower and I saw its transverse beams, and these began to stretch to the east and to the west, and they took away the sins of all God's people and carried them into the place of forgetfulness, where they never shall be found, while a shadow, broad as the universe, seemed to fall upon creatures of all kinds, and wherever it fell the shadow dropped with the benedictions of heaven. Oh! that crucifixion of the Lord Jesus—how deep, how high, how broad! The imagination cannot conceive it, but the soul delights in it.

And then, as I seemed to look with eyes closed, I thought I saw in my vision a flock of doves, fluttered and afraid, and well they might be, for there were archers after them, and the sharp arrows all but pierced their breasts. Nay, some fell wounded sore, and they flitted to the groves, and they flew to the far-off sea, and to the wilderness, but the sharp shafts pursued them everywhere, and the doves found no rest for the soles of their feet.

At last one day they lighted on the cross, and they marked that every shaft fell short, and some that were shot at them with double force were splintered and broken, and fell upon the ground. Not a single dove was hurt, but all found shelter there. Lord, make me one of those doves, and may my soul escape the arrows of my spiritual foes. Let me find shelter on my Savior's precious cross, for there is shelter there, and there alone.

And then the picture changed and I saw before me the whole earth, as it now looks without rain, and it was all parched and browned, and seemed ready to be burned, and the plants hung down their heads, and the flowers seemed to be pining for the tears of the angels to drop down upon them from heaven, but nothing came.

Yet I noticed that all along wherever the shadow of the cross fell it was all verdant as in spring, and every flower seemed as if it did drink in the dew and opened its cup towards the light that streamed from the cross. 'Twas all fertile there where the cross-shadow fell, but all barren elsewhere. And is it not so? Wherever there is the influence of the atoning blood, wherever the cross is fully preached and received,

every soul is blessed, and happy, and fruitful—but where it is not so, there is an arid waste, on which the dew of heaven falls not.

And while I thought I saw before me a caravan, and there were camels, and hundreds of men, the drivers of the camels, and they were all hot, and panting, and fainting. They went to the well and rolled away the stone, but they found no water there. So they went onward, ready to drop at every step. Before them they thought they saw a cooling stream, but it was a mirage, and they were mocked.

But I thought I saw them suddenly halt at the foot of the cross, and just at the bottom of it there sprang up a clear and crystal spring, and each one drank, and went on his way refreshed. And what are the sons of men, but a great caravan on the way to realms unknown, and where is there water for so much as one of them, except at the cross-foot? If they drink there, they live. If they drink not there, there is for them nought beside.

Many other things passed before me, but I cannot detail them now, for we have spent too much time upon this second point and must pass to the third. The third point, very briefly discussed, is this—

III. IF WE DO GLORY IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST, HOW SHALL WE PROVE IT?

We must prove it *by trusting in the cross*. The atonement must have our only confidence, or else it were vain to say that we glory in it.

We must prove it, next, *by holding fast the doctrine when others impugn it*. We must be confident about this vicarious sacrifice of Christ, let others say what they may.

We must prove it *by our zeal in propagating it according to the best of our ability*. We must endeavor as much as lies in us to tell the good news to others, that whosoever believes has everlasting life.

But there are some here who are called to the ministry, and therefore, to them let me say that we must prove that we glory in it *most by being prepared to suffer for it*. Any man who is called to the ministry may, if he will take an example from yonder dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. There you see the cross above the globe. You must put from henceforth the cross above the world in all your calculations. To preach Jesus and to win souls, and not to gain money or human applause, must be the way in which you prove that you glory in the cross.

But the principal way is *by constantly preaching about it*. What shall I say to young men who are about to enter the ministry that shall be more useful to them than this? Keep to the cross! Keep to the cross! Always preach up Jesus Christ! Always preach up Jesus Christ! I think no sermon should be without the doctrine of salvation by faith in it. I would not close a single discourse without at least something about believing in Jesus and living.

Oh! that our tongues would speak of nothing but Jesus. Oh! that we were something like Rutherford, who is said to have had a squeaking voice on every other subject, but when he began to speak of Christ, the little man would grow tall and his voice become full, so that the Duke, who was one of his hearers, shouted, "Now, man, you're on the right string!" Oh! surely, this is a theme that might inspire the very dumb, and make the dead to rise, to tell of Jesus Christ's most wondrous love.

I have thus, as well in the short time I had allowed, shown how we may glory in the cross. But if we do so, according to the text, *we are not to expect to go to heaven in silver slippers*, for the apostle adds, "*By which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*." There are two crosses in that saying—there is the world crucified there, and there is Paul crucified here. What means he by this?

Why, he means that ever since he fell in love with Jesus Christ, *he lost all love for the world*. It seemed to him to be a poor, crucified, dying thing, and he turned away from it just as you would from a criminal whom you might see hanging in chains, and would desire to go anywhere rather than see the poor being.

So Paul seemed to see the world on gallows—hung up there. "There," said he, "that is what I think of you, and all your pomp, and all your power, and all your wealth, and all your fame! You are on the gallows, a malefactor, nailed up, crucified! I would not give a fig for you. I would not turn on my heel to

speak to you—all that you could give me would no more suit my taste than as if husks were given to me. Give them to your own swine and let them fatten thereon!"

You know the world is not crucified to "the successors of the apostle," and all others who preach merely as a profession. They get their living out of it—they are endowed by the world—the State or the church pays them. The world is not crucified to them. That is the change that has come over the times, but to the first apostle, the world was crucified.

And now observe the other cross. There is Paul on that. The world thinks as little of Paul as Paul does of the world. The world says, "Oh! that hair-brained Paul! He was sensible once, but he has gone mad upon that stubborn notion about the Crucified One. The man is a fool." So the world crucifies him.

It was something like the case of Luther, when he said, "There is no love lost between me and the Pope of Rome. He hates me and I also hate him with all my heart, and soul, and strength." So is it with the world and the genuine Christian. If he glories in Christ, he must expect to be misunderstood, misrepresented, and attacked.

And on the other hand, he will say that he would sooner have the world's scorn than its honor, he would sooner have its hate than its love, for the love of the world is enmity against God. Blessed are you when they shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for Christ's sake and the Gospel's. Set your account, you Christians, upon rough weather and get seaworthy vessels that will stand a gale or two. Ask the Lord to give you grace enough to suffer and endure for that precious Savior who will give you reward enough when you see Him face to face, for one hour with Him will make up for it all.

Therefore, be faithful, and may the Lord help you thus to glory in the cross of Christ. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

GALATIANS 4:12-31; 5:1-4, 19-26; 6:1-11

GALATIANS 4:12-31

Verse 12. *Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.*

He had told them the Gospel, and other teachers had come in and alienated their affections. He says, "Now I am just the same to you as ever I was. I wish you would have the same love to me."

13-14. *Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*

He dwells upon that. They had been so enthusiastic about his teaching when he first taught them, that he feels grieved that now they have gone aside to other teaching—not because it injured him, but because it injured them.

15. *Where is then the blessedness ye spoke of?*

When you said that you were happy to live in Paul's days, glad to listen to so simple and plain a teacher?

15-16. *For I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?*

Ah! there are many who have incurred enmity through speaking the Gospel very plainly, for the natural tendency of man is towards ceremony, towards some form of legal righteousness—he must have something aesthetic, something that delights his sensuous nature, something that he can see and hear, to mix up that with the simplicity of faith—and Paul was as clear as noonday against everything of that kind, and so the Galatians, at last, were angry with him. Well, he could not help that, but it did grieve him.

17. *They zealously court you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.*

They would, if they could, turn you out of our love that you might run after them. These false teachers would shut us out of your hearts that your hearts might go after them.

18-21. *But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?*

Will you not listen to what the law itself teaches? Here is a little bit from one of its first books, the book of Genesis.

22-23. *For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, and the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh;*

In the strength of Abraham.

23. *But he of the freewoman was by promise.*

In the power of God, born after both father and mother had ceased to be capable of becoming parents, born in the power of God.

24. *Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants: the one from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.*

Those that are under the law are the children, therefore, of the bondwoman—they are born slaves.

25. *For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.*

It is old Judaism coming from Sinai, “This do, and thou shalt live,” and all the children that are born under it are children of nature and they are not the children of promise.

26. *But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*

This is Sarah, and they that believe are the Isaac-children, the children of holy laughter, born according to the power of God.

27-29. *For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.*

The child of Hagar could not stand the child of Sarah, and they that seek salvation by the works of the law, and by outward ceremonies, cannot endure the children of faith.

30-31. *Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.*

GALATIANS 5

Verses 1-4. *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*

If you mean to have anything to do with salvation by works, get you gone—you are the children of the bondwoman.

Verses 19-21. *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envynings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.*

A black catalog, but sin is very prolific. We must take care that we avoid each one of these works of the flesh, or else we shall give no proof that we are led by the Spirit of God and possess the grace of God.

21. *Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Read over the list. Put the question to conscience, “Am I guilty of such things?” If so, do not suppose that the holding of orthodox doctrine will save you, or that any kind of religious ceremony will save you. You must be delivered from these lusts of the flesh—these deeds of the flesh or you cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

22-23. *But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

Surely, neither human nor divine. These are things which are commended on all hands. But if we do not have them—if they are not found in us—then we have not the Spirit, for if we had the Spirit, we would bear the fruit of the Spirit.

24-26. *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory,*

A very common sin—wishing to shine. Whether we deserve to be honored or not, still wanting to be the fore-horse in the team, and to take the leading place. “Let us not be desirous of vain glory.”

26. *Provoking one another, envying one another.*

If each would strive who should do the greatest deeds of love and each were willing to take the lowest place, then this evil would never be known again.

GALATIANS 6

Verse 1. *Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

When Christians fall into a fault, it is on account of their traveling slowly on the road to heaven. Hence the expression, “If he be overtaken with a fault.” He would not have been overtaken if he had been traveling faster. If his heart had been quick in the ways of the Lord, he would have outstripped the temptation.

Now, when a brother falls into sin, it is too often the habit to push him down—to cast him out and forget him. But spiritually-minded persons must not do so. We must seek the restoration of the brother. Is there not more joy over the sheep that was lost than over those that went not astray? Have we not the best reason to deal tenderly with wanderers, since we cannot tell that we may not need the same generous offices for ourselves? “Considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.” He seems to take it for granted that we probably should, if we were tempted as the other brother was.

2. *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

Help each other. If you have a light load, take a part of somebody else's.

3. *For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*

Mainly deceives himself. Other people generally find it out. It is no use estimating your fortune at so many millions, for it will not make it so. And it is of no use estimating yourself at a very high price, because it does not make it so. “He deceiveth himself.”

4-5. *But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.*

There are burdens of care and sorrow which we can help others to bear, but the burdens of responsibility each man must carry for himself. The load of service for the Master must be carried personally. And let us be glad to shoulder it, since Christ has done so much for us. And how else can we express gratitude but by serving Him?

6. *Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.*

If he gives you spirituals, do not suffer him to lack for temporals.

7-8. *Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap—*

What the flesh always comes to, by and by—

8. *Corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit—*

By faith in Christ—by being led by the Spirit—

8-10. *Shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

They have a first claim upon us. They are nearest of kin. They are our brethren in Christ. Let them have a Benjamin's portion.

11. *You see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.*

Paul did not often write his own epistles. It is thought that he had a defect of the eyes. He employed a amanuensis generally. When he did write, he wrote generally in great capitals. I suppose that is what he meant. “You see how emphatic my writing is—what great characters I have made in writing to you.” Or he may have meant that for a letter, written by him, this was a lengthy one.

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